IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete listing of the claims, which replaces all previous versions and listings of the claims.

1. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for processing digital images comprising:

analyzing image data to identify ~~undesired~~ indicia ~~to be obfuscated~~ apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data;

identifying one or more region in which the ~~undesired~~ indicia appear in the image; [[and]]

comparing the indicia to a list of indicia to remain decipherable or to a list of indicia to be rendered undecipherable in the reconstructed image; and

based upon the comparison, replacing image data for [[the]] ~~one or more regions~~ at least one region with replacement data to render ~~the undesired~~ indicia undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying indicia include text defined by pixels of the image reconstructed from the image data.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the indicia are identified by optical character recognition.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the replacement data masks the one or more region with a substantially uniform pixel intensity.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, comprising identifying indicia to remain decipherable in the image reconstructed from the image data, and wherein the step of replacing the image data only replaces data for the at least one region ~~one or more regions~~ and not for regions in which the indicia to remain decipherable appear.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, comprising allowing desired indicia to remain decipherable in the image reconstructed from the image data.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the desired indicia include indicia providing a general description of the image subject matter or a date.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the image data represents a medical diagnostic image, and wherein ~~the undesired~~ indicia rendered undecipherable include patient identifying indicia.

9. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the image data encodes a grey scale image.

10. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for processing digital images comprising:

analyzing image data via optical character recognition to identify textual indicia apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data;

identifying one or more region in which the indicia appear in the image; [[and]]

comparing the identified textual indicia to a list of textual indicia to remain decipherable in the reconstructed image; and

based upon the comparison, replacing image data for ~~the one or more regions~~ at least one region with replacement data to render [[the]] indicia in the at least one region undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data, and wherein textual indicia to remain decipherable in the reconstructed image is not replaced with replacement data.

11. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein the image data represents a medical diagnostic image, and wherein the undesired indicia include patient identifying indicia.

12. (canceled)

13. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein the textual indicia to remain decipherable include indicia providing a general description of the image subject matter or a date.

14. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein the replacement data masks the one or more region with a substantially uniform pixel intensity.

15. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for processing digital images comprising:

analyzing medical diagnostic image data via optical character recognition to identify textual indicia including indicia of patient identity apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data;

identifying one or more region in which the indicia appear in the image; [[and]]

comparing the identified textual indicia to a list of textual indicia to be rendered undecipherable in the reconstructed image; and

based upon the comparison, replacing image data for [[the]] one or more regions in which textual indicia is to be rendered undecipherable with replacement data to render the indicia undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data.

16. (canceled)

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the textual indicia to remain decipherable include indicia providing a general description of the image subject matter or a date.

18. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein the replacement data masks the one or more region with a substantially uniform pixel intensity.

19. (currently amended) A system for processing digital images comprising:

means for analyzing image data to identify ~~undesired~~ indicia ~~to be obfuscated~~ apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data;

means for identifying one or more region in which the ~~undesired~~ indicia appear in the image; [[and]]

means for comparing the indicia to a list of indicia to remain decipherable or to a list of indicia to be rendered undecipherable in the reconstructed image; and

means for replacing image data for [[the]] ~~one or more regions~~ at least one region with replacement data to render ~~the undesired~~ indicia undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data based upon the comparison.

20. (currently amended) A system for processing digital images comprising:

means for analyzing image data via optical character recognition to identify textual indicia apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data;

means for identifying one or more region in which the indicia appear in the image; [[and]]

means for comparing the identified textual indicia to a list of textual indicia to remain decipherable in the reconstructed image; and

means for replacing image data for ~~the one or more regions~~ at least one region with replacement data to render [[the]] indicia in the at least one region undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data, and wherein textual indicia to remain

decipherable in the reconstructed image is not replaced with replacement data based on upon the comparison.

21. (currently amended) A system for processing digital images comprising:

means for analyzing medical diagnostic image data via optical character recognition to identify textual indicia including indicia of patient identity apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data;

means for identifying one or more region in which the indicia appear in the image; [[and]]

means for comparing the identified textual indicia to a list of textual indicia to be rendered undecipherable in the reconstructed image; and

means for replacing image data for [[the]] one or more regions in which textual indicia is to be rendered undecipherable with replacement data to render the indicia undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data based upon the comparison.

22. (currently amended) A computer program for processing image data comprising:

at least one computer readable medium; and

code stored on the at least one computer readable medium encoding routines for analyzing image data to identify ~~undesired~~ indicia ~~to be obfuscated~~ apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data, identifying one or more region in which the ~~undesired~~ indicia appear in the image, comparing the indicia to a list of indicia to remain decipherable or to a list of indicia to be rendered undecipherable in the reconstructed image, and replacing image data for [[the]] ~~one or more regions~~ at least one region with replacement data to render ~~the undesired~~ indicia undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data based upon the comparison.

23. (currently amended) A computer program for processing image data comprising:

at least one computer readable medium; and

code stored on the at least one computer readable medium encoding routines for analyzing image data via optical character recognition to identify textual indicia apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data, identifying one or more region in which the indicia appear in the image, comparing the identified textual indicia to a list of textual indicia to remain decipherable in the reconstructed image, and replacing image data for ~~the one or more regions~~ at least one region with replacement data to render [[the]] indicia in the at least one region undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data, and wherein textual indicia to remain decipherable in the reconstructed image is not replaced with replacement data based upon the comparison.

24. (currently amended) A computer program for processing image data comprising:

at least one computer readable medium; and

code stored on the at least one computer readable medium encoding routines for analyzing medical diagnostic image data via optical character recognition to identify textual indicia including indicia of patient identity apparent in an image reconstructed from the image data, identifying one or more region in which the indicia appear in the image, comparing the identified textual indicia to a list of textual indicia to be rendered undecipherable in the reconstructed image, and replacing image data for [[the]] one or more regions in which textual indicia is to be rendered undecipherable with replacement data to render the indicia undecipherable in an image reconstructed from the image data based upon the comparison.

25. (currently amended) An image generated by the method of claim 1 and stored on a computer readable medium.

26. (currently amended) An image generated by the method of claim 10 and stored on a computer readable medium.

27. (currently amended) An image generated by the method of claim 15 and stored on a computer readable medium.